DEUTSCHE AFRIKA-LINIEN
JOHN T. ESSBERGER

news

December/2018 The Group's In-House Magazine www.rantzau.de

Proper stress management is key to safety on board

There are ways to fight fatigue and depression in wintertime

Winter in northern Europe puts the crews on board under immense physical and mental strain. Frequent storms, the cold, and ice drift as well as the crew members being away from their families, especially on traditional public holidays such as Christmas and New Year, are the norm. And that's on top of the usual tasks like frequent berth changes and switching from loading to discharging operations, difficult coastal ranges with high volumes of traffic, monotonous on-board schedules and increasing bureaucracy on board.

All that can lead to dangerous adverse effects when it comes to safety on board, to inattentiveness and fatigue, even serious depression. Good stress management and sufficient sleep, a well-balanced diet and physical activities on board, as well as a harmonious atmosphere among the crew are prerequisites for higher productivity. This also includes knowing one can rely on the on-shore organisation as a trusted partner who is familiar with these problems and is available to the ship's command to provide understanding and advice 24/7 so that accidents resulting from inattentiveness or fatigue do not occur.

(continued on page 2)

Photo: Andreas Vallbracht

Rigging a Christmas tree on the mast of an Essberger chemical tanker. One of the rare moments in modern life where we share the same thoughts

Photo: Michael Zapf

Trainees always welcome! Why not starting a career in shipping? The DAL/JTE Group, where tradition meets modernity, offers profound training in an international environment. Get a few impressions and like us on Instagram dal_jte, or write an email to Svenja.Albrechtsen@Rantzau.de On this image you see our latest generation of trainees on their way to future success.

In the past decade the world of shipping has changed dramatically. Many German shipowners had to strike their flag. As the DAL/JTE Group we were able to maintain our independence and expand our fleet during the crisis. But we cannot rest on our laurels if we want to hold our ground on the market. There is little we can do about unfavourable economic conditions, such as currency fluctuations, high bunker prices and rate pressure. However, we can do something about ship operating and administration costs, ensuring smooth internal processes and drawing up realistic forecasts. In our day-to-day operations, we must not lose sight of the future market developments.

Liner shipping is suffering from high bunker prices, and low freight and rising charter rates. This has led to a substantial decline in our financial result. UAFL suffered additionally under the political unrest in the Indian Ocean range, but we see steady results at the DAL Agency.

Integrating the 14 tankers we took over from Crystal Nordic into the Essberger fleet is well under way. Our top priority must now be to ensure technical reliability at competitive operating costs and to prevent idle days to ensure our position as the market leader. To enable our Ship Management to fully concentrate on this task, we have outsourced the management of our bulk carriers. These vessels are still struggling owing to charter rates that are far from reaching break-even.

Despite a good start in 2018, by the end of the year the result was unsatisfactory, and we must now do our utmost to get back to sustainable, acceptable results.

I thank all of you for your consistent loyalty and assistance, and I wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Yours Eberhart von Rantzau

How to reduce sulphur emissions

There are three main compliance options/Scrubbers are widely under discussion – but how do they work?

According to an International Maritime Organisation (IMO) resolution, shipowners are obliged from 2020 to reduce the harmful sulphur content in fuel from currently 3.5 to 0.5 per cent. What are the consequences for shipping companies? DAL/JTE News gives a brief overview.

What can you do to reduce sulphur emissions?

The three main compliance options are:

1. Change from heavy fuel oil (HFO) to marine gas oil (MGO) or to the new compliant low-sulphur fuels. A tonne of MGO is appr. 50% more expensive than a tonne of HFO.

2. Switch to alternative fuels, e.g. liquefied natural gas (LNG). But the infrastructure for global LNG is still insufficient. Converting an existing engine to a so-called dual-fuel engine and installing the LNG storage tanks is costly and complex. An LNG engine therefore only makes sense for newbuilds if the LNG supply is secured.

3. In order to continue operating conventional engines burning comparatively cheap HFO, operators will have to install exhaust gas scrubbers. Their installation is also complex and expensive, and owing to their large weight and space requirements are not doable in every case. Scrubber systems are an increasingly preferred option by shipping companies today. Initial calculations are based on the assumption that the investment will pay for itself after about one and a half years, owing to cheaper HFO bunker. This mainly applies to big container ships on ocean passages.

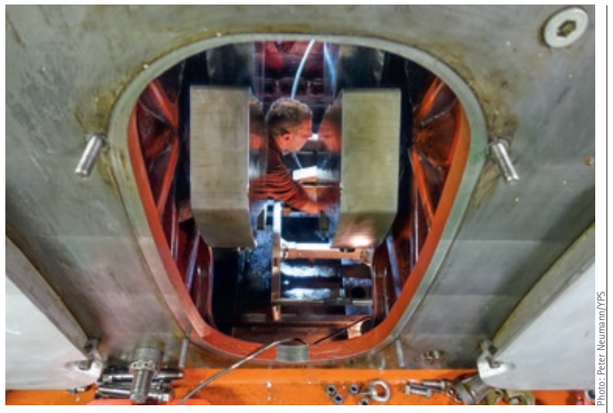

Photo: Peter Neumann/VPS

This is where the emissions are generated: open engine of a tanker

How does a scrubber work?

A scrubber is a device installed in a ship's exhaust system behind the engine or boiler, which treats exhaust gas with an absorbent with the goal of removing most of the SOx from the exhaust and reducing particulate matters (PM). All scrubber technologies create a waste stream containing the substances used for the cleaning process, plus the SOx and PM removed from the exhaust. There are basically two scrubber techniques available: a wet scrubbing process, which uses a liquid absorbent; and a dry scrubbing process, which uses dry absorbents, such as limestone. The most commonly used scrubber type on board ships is the wet scrubber where the exhaust gas passes through a liquid medium in order to remove SOx compounds from gas by chemically reacting with the wash liquid. Systems are identified either as an open-loop or closed-loop system. Hybrid systems offer both methods of scrubbing.

The most common liquids are untreated seawater and chemically treated freshwater. In open-loop operation, seawater is used directly from the sea, flows through the tower and is discharged overboard. The source water must generally be seawater with a high sodium chloride content.

In a closed-loop scrubber, the water is commonly treated freshwater. Additives are used to react with the washwater after each passage through the scrubbing tower for water treatment and recycled back into the scrubber in a continuous closed cycle. The waste stream and generated sludge has to be processed before discharging overboard, where allowed, or stored and discharged to shore reception facilities. An open-loop scrubber uses seawater as the medium for cleaning or scrubbing the exhaust. Seawater is normally supplied by a dedicated pump. CO_2 dissolves in the seawater forming carbonic acid, bicarbonate or carbonate. In a closed-loop scrubber, treated water is circulated through the scrubber to keep the scrubbing process independent of the chemistry of the waters through which the vessel is sailing. The washwater goes to a residue/sludge tank for disposal ashore. There are advantages to open-loop systems, such as not requiring caustic soda, and the avoidance of processing washwater. Closed-loop system advantages include the scrubber working with the same efficiency independently of where the vessel is operating, and there is little or no water discharge making it best suited for coastal, port and inland waters. In order to utilise the advantages of both systems, some manufacturers have proposed hybrid scrubbing systems. These can be operated as an open-loop system on the open ocean and as a closed-loop system when in sensitive sea or low-alkalinity areas. The changeover from open to closed loop is done by changing over the circulating pump suction from seawater to the circulating tank, and by changing the washwater discharge from overboard discharge to the circulation tank.

Essberger Tankers operating in the North Sea and Baltic areas are already using MGO bunkers. It has not yet been decided if scrubbers are a realistic alternative for the Essberger Dry Cargo fleet.

Fatigue and depression in wintertime

(continued from page 1)

Fatigue is currently a huge topic in the global shipping industry, especially in the winter months. At the Essberger Tankers seminar for captains and nautical and technical officers in Sudermühlen in October 2018, the topic played a superior role in order to find prevention strategies (*see page 4*).

Besides the physical strain, mental strain seems to be on the rise in seafarers' lives. A recently published university paper from the degree course Security and Safety Engineering, "Mental strain in shipping" (Lena Hoffmann, Cuxhaven 2018), attests to this. It states that the rate of deadly accidents at sea is 12 times higher than the average in German companies on land. Particularly noteworthy is the high suicide rate of 15% in the category "Unnatural accidents".

At Deutsche Afrika-Linien/John T. Essberger, as a long-standing family-owned shipping company, community spirit and safety as well as care for their staff at sea (and ashore) play a very special role and always have done. That's why the new code of conduct trends in Ship Management/Crewing are under constant scrutiny.

Another problem that only arose in recent years seems to be "isolation" on board. In contrast to any assumptions, increasing use of social media apparently worsens the feeling of isolation. The seafarers' seemingly great closeness to their families ashore through social media means additional stress instead of a benefit.

Seamen's missions are very much concerned about this phenomenon. DAL/JTE News interviewed Anke Wibel, head of the multi-award-winning seamen's mission Duckdalben in the port of Hamburg, about this topic *(see page 8)*.

For confidential help turn to your master or the designated person ashore (name and address on the ship's newsboard) or directly to Bjoern Borbe (+49 40 38016 496).

Same again but maybe even better

Essberger Night in Hamburg is still a magnet when it comes to people from the chemical tanker business

Jürgen Warnecke (JTE retiree) gets a warm welcome from the hosts Heinrich von Rantzau, Philipp von Rantzau, Dr Eberhart von Rantzau and JTE MD Jan Hammer

Anne Tautorat (JTE) and Marit Gebel (LyondellBasell)

Elena Grigoleit with Malte Willer and Zoe Abbott (Clarksons)

Emil Heeren and Suzanne Roodenberg (Shell Chemicals), Peter van den Akker (Odin Marine)

Arne Olav Hommefoss (CM Olsen), Lars Anderssen (CM Olsen), Sara Lind (Swedmar Shipping), Jarle Fuglestad (Equinor)

Presentation of our new Essberger members 2018: Svenja Behnke, Dorina Wichern, Jan Eghøj, Tim Schwasta, Maximilian Schüller, Jan Hammer, Kristin Päuser, Malte Willer, André Rimmel, Zanetta Oborskaja

Barbara Moggia (Genoa Energy), Katrin Maciej (Helm), Julia Döring (Helm), Sonja Witte (Helm), Caren Braemer (Helm)

Cinzia Cincotta (Cincotta Shipping), Eva Sanjoaquin (Next Maritime)

Christian Meyer (Meyer-Essberger Tanker Agency), Kristin Päuser, Henrik Blendermann (Meyer-Essberger Tanker Agency), Dorina Wichern, Britta Sengstake

Photos: Gerdijk

Jan Eghøj and Christian Vang

Sara Lind (Swedmar Shipping), Henrik Lundberg (GAC Sweden), Erik Hanberger (Stem Shipping)

Vanja Buitendijk (INOX Surface Treatment) and Jasperina de Man (Vopak Agencies Rotterdam)

Vincent Meyn and Sandra Stadelmann (Albis Shipping), Sam Groves (Integr8 Europe)

It's vital to take outmost care of our ships

Captains and officers gather at the Sudermühlen seminar/Excerpts from Dr von Rantzau's welcoming speech

The Sudermühlen seminars have now become a tradition in our company. Some of you are here for the first time. This is the result of our acquisition of Crystal Nordic. The acquisition of Crystal Nordic in January 2018 is in line with our business policy to further establish and expand our position as the European market leader in the coastal chemical trade.

Our activities are currently focused on the integration of Crystal Nordic into our chemical tanker business. The commercial part, which includes consolidation of Chartering and Operations in Hamburg and the reduction of our Copenhagen office to just two people, is almost complete. The acquisition and integration of another company into our existing organisation is always a big challenge.

The change of management calls for a new start in terms of vetting, meaning you lose all customer approvals, and additionally brings up the question of crew matrices, which can also make a ship not suitable for certain customers if we should not fulfil the requirements. At the end of the day, however, the question of being satisfied or not comes down to the bottom-line financial result.

We had a good start this year with time charter earnings higher than expected and budgeted. This high lasted through to July, when the market suddenly almost collapsed. I certainly hope the balance of this year will see an improvement, but of course we have no guarantee.

As you all know we are presently seeing big movements in the oil price, which have a large impact on our business, as well as the opening up of all trade agreements by President Trump, and to some extent the potential effects of Brexit are elusive. At the same time our ships are becoming a bit older each day. Despite our acquisition of Crystal Nordic, the question of new buildings is surfacing. Current earnings do not justify newbuilds, they are too expensive and our business therefore not sustainable. The question of economics versus age restrictions, as required by many customers, both for our existing fleet and potential newbuilds, is still being evaluated. In this context, you may have noticed that we have initiated a sort of campaign with the purpose to see if we can make our customers understand that age restriction of less than 25 years for stainless steel chemical tankers makes no sense. As a result of this campaign I hope and expect to see adjustment of some of the age restrictions that prevail among some of our customers.

To run a fleet of 37 chemical tankers in European trades is a lot of hard work and requires constant attention and communication. Essberger Tankers are a fit-for-purpose organisation. We have well-qualified people like yourselves here tonight, and we have a good system and tools. But we will always have to look for ways to become better and more effective.

As we all know the majority of accidents is caused by human error. Furthermore, our budget has come under pressure due to unexpected hidden defects of vessels in our fleet. This is not tolerable for a company that considers itself the market leader.

It is vital for the future of our company that you take outmost care of the ships we entrust to you. Together with the technical management of Essberger, you have to make sure fleet availability is maximum – at competitive costs.

With our seminars we offer you a platform to understand what has gone wrong and to work on improvements. The future of JTE lies in our hands!

Cpt Maciej Randak, 2/E Zoran Zambata, 2/O Dariusz Pachula, C/O Blazej Czapiewski, C/E Piotr Popiel, C/E Arnoldus Eland, C/O David Jones, Mrs Patricia von Rantzau, C/O Szczepan Pachula, Dr Eberhart von Rantzau, C/O Deniss Andrejevs, C/E Marten Bosma, Cpt Zoltan Fejer, 2/E Adrian Ciurariu, 2/O Karol Wasala, Cpt Adam Krzyzykowski, Cpt Stefan Grabowski, 2/E Szczepan Skolimowski, Cpt Boguslaw Olbrys

C/E Glebs Kutuzovs, 2/E Sergei Ryzkov, C/E Dmitry Shcherbov, 2/E Mikhail Borisyuk, Cpt Robert Szmaj, C/O Piotr Adamski, 2/E Alexandru Lupascu, C/O Damian Rechnio, 2/E Petrica Stancu, C/O Jaroslaw Krok, 2/E Grzegorz Polonski, Mrs Patricia von Rantzau, Cpt Arnoldus van Groenestijn, Dr Eberhart von Rantzau, 2/E Bartholomeus Brand, Cpt Edgar Roelofsen, C/E Andrejs Beloglazovs, Cpt Koen Ghysels, Cpt Ali Ayara

Presented by Mrs Patricia von Rantzau, Cpt Robert Szmaj, C/O Jaroslaw Krok, and Cpt Stefan Grabowski with their awards for long-time service with JTE

"We believe in long term partnership"

Neil Carrick of DAL Agency talks about a decade of successful operations in Cape Town

DAL/JTE NEWS: Neil, you have been working for DAL Agency (Pty) Ltd. since late 2008. How did that begin?

NEIL CARRICK: I started my career back in October 1995 working for Unifruco, later Capespan where I was finally responsible for shipping-related matters. It was Ron Frick who offered me a new job. In 2018, I reached my ten-year milestone with DAL Agency.

DAL/JTE NEWS: Who is working in the office today?

NEIL CARRICK: Ashraf Tasriet's primary focus is sales on dry both north and southbound. Chantal Doger De Speville is our dedicated Reefer Sales Executive. Karen Bertoni is the Reefer Coordinator. Anne Belman is our Assistant Financial Manager. François Trautmann is our Export Team Leader. Zaida Ebrahim is an Export Controller and so are Deon Eyssen, Deidre Bosch and Lynette Crighton. Josephine Govender is our newest addition to the Export Team. Robin Theodore was promoted to Import Team Leader. Benita Pieterse is an Import Controller, Liam Crowe an Import Controller. Almost 50% of the current staff complement has more than 10 years with DAL Agency, which speaks for the culture of the organisation.

DAL/JTE NEWS: What makes Cape Town's shipping business so special?

NEIL CARRICK: Cape Town is a region active for almost 10 months of the year from a fruit perspective, mainly apples, pears, citrus fruits and grapes. We also participate in export of frozen meat from Namibia and Botswana, of frozen fish, flowers and vegetables. Inbound containers include consolidated goods, personal effects, plastic goods, machinery and a wide variety of commodities for major supermarket groups.

DAL/JTE NEWS: What do you do better than your competitors?

NEIL CARRICK: We believe in building long-term partnerships with our customers. Regular face-to-face meeting ensure that all queries are responded to promptly. Every customer is important, irrespective of how many containers they export or import.

DAL/JTE NEWS: The port of Cape Town is prone to wind and weather-related delays, often up to three to four days. What impact do these delays to the vessels have on your team's workload in servicing DAL's clients?

NEIL CARRICK: For export cargo, we are unable to issue a shipped-on-board waybill or bill of lading to the customer until the containers are loaded onto the vessel and the vessel has then departed. Next available vessel stacking dates and times are affected whereby the stacking period will move out and could not be suitable for the customers' requirements. From an imports' point of view these delays are bad for our clients and workload increases where we find ourselves working on 3 to 4 vessels at once at different stages. These delays are out of our control. We assist our clients the best we can by requesting separate stacking so that specific containers may be made available upon discharge by the terminal while the vessel is still working.

DAL/JTE NEWS: Are you satisfied with the general performance of the port?

NEIL CARRICK: The port has made good strides in gearing up reefer plug-in capacity, overall quay length and draught. The port is however a hybrid terminal making use of rubber tyre gantry and straddle carriers. This does impact the overall terminal efficiency. Operational port activities can be severely impacted when wind speeds approach 90km/hour. The investigation of best practice worldwide for equipment that can withstand high wind speeds need to be investigated. There are mechanisms that Transnet can implement to deal with this more effectively.

DAL/JTE NEWS: Early this year CT suffered from a serious drought. What does it mean for people living in CT?

NEIL CARRICK: The worst case was thankfully avoided through working to daily water limits, 50 litres per person. As a result the city of Cape Town embarked on numerous desalinisation plant projects. Some residents of Cape Town also drilled for well points and boreholes. Water in general was very cheap for many years in Cape Town and was thus abused. Through proper education and awareness all Capetonians now realise just how precious this scarce resource is. The average combined dam levels are now at 73%. They were at 37% for the same period in 2017.

DAL/JTE NEWS: Cape Town is claimed to be one of the most attractively located cities in the world.

NEIL CARRICK: We are blessed with the most beautiful scenery imaginable. Life is relaxed and laid back in Cape Town. People are friendly. Public transport is much improved but still a challenge. Cape Town is a main tourist attraction. That speaks for itself. We like to live here.

DAL Agency crew Cape Town: Standing (left to right) Ashraf Tasriet, Chantal Doger de Speville, Karen Bertoni, François Trautmann, Zaida Ebrahim, Suhailah Lippert, Deidre Bosch, Lynette Crighton, Robin Theodore, Benita Pieterse, Deon Eyssen. Seated Josephine Govender, Neil Carrick, Anne Belman with Liam Crowe

Congrats

73 out of 80 DAL Agency staff members celebrated the 10th anniversary of the company in the Gateway Hotel in Durban with a dinner-dance. Guests included retired Agency founder Ron Frick, partner Salah Sharaf and Michael Davies, Director Trades DAL. Long-year awards were given to 30 members with 10 years and 14 members with 5 years. Great company, great agency, great people, great party.

8 of 80 people who give DAL Agency a face: Hemant Chawla, David McCallum, Carol D'Alton, Alvin Naicker, Suzette Jordaan, Ron Frick, Michael Davies, Salah Sharaf (from left)

Whereabouts

December 2018

Ship's name	Master	First Mate	Chief Engineer
Agnes Essberger	Andrey Grzhibovskiy	Viacheslav Leonov	Saturnino Yuson
Alcedo	Adolph Kamphuis	Glebs Lilicenko	Sipke Steenbergen
Amalie Essberger	Piotr Bes	Juris Jurionas	Vitaliy Kolesnyk
Anneliese Essberger	Marco Boshuijzen	Rik Bolwijn	Teunis Oskam
Annette Essberger	Lien Jeanne Huyghe	André Steenbergen	Marten Bosma
Ardea	Arnoldus Van Groenestijn	Jakub Nadaj	Jelle Spoelstra
Caroline Essberger	Nicolaas Bruinsma	Pawel Pawlik	Dionysius Jannink
Christian Essberger	Robert Szmaj	Mateusz Borysewicz	Zbigniew Biernacki
Dutch Aquamarine	Gerardus Wijnands	Kokou Gbegan	Hendrik Van Schoonhoven
Dutch Emerald	Louis Kint	Pieter Labee	Hendrik Berg
Dutch Faith	Sander De Bos	Onno Smit	Sijbren Mollinga
Dutch Spirit	Theo Keizer	Sjoerd Rijndorp	Ronald Van Herwijnen
Eduard Essberger	Gocha Bezhanidze	Antonio Jr. Ocampo	Marcin Prena
Ellen Essberger	Adam Krzyzykowski	Denis Vlasov	Herbert Farkas
Elsa Essberger	Stefan Grabowski	Grzegorz Kakol	Aleksey Plyasukhin
Georg Essberger	Jose Teixeira	Valeriy Dorofeev	Tomasz Kozlowski
Gisela Essberger	Ali Ayara	Maksim Naumcik	Marek Ptasznik
Helga Essberger	Waldemar Literski	Jaroslaw Krok	Andrejs Beloglazovs
Johann Essberger	Zarko Boko	Dariusz Podsiadly	Glebs Kutuzovs
John Augustus Essberger	Bartosz Selau	Arkadiusz Duczynski	Andrzej Sullik
Koralia	Jose Jr Subradil	Samuel Ruedas	Dony Merwoto
Liesel Essberger	Antonio Petinga	Marcin Zietek	Leonid Volkov
Lisa Essberger	Alex Buren	Mark Van Den Heuvel	Arnoldus Eland
Lucy Essberger	Leonardus Kanters	Gerben Bosscher	Stefan Kluijfhout
Maersk Launceston	Mariusz Pleskacz	Dmytro Stygar	Jacek Wojcicki
Patricia Essberger	Grzegorz Klepacki	Szczepan Pachula	Grzegorz Topolewski
Philipp Essberger	Zoltan Elemer Fejer	Roman Rybin	Vitor Belo
Theodor Essberger	Boguslaw Gajdowski	Blazej Czapiewski	Ryszard Topolewski
Ubena	Eugeniusz Naciuk	Angie Mae Cagud	Ilarion Sorin Chirtes
Ulanga	Pavlo Klyuyev	Marcelo Borbon	Piotr Turski
Ursula Essberger	Koen Ghysels	Jeroen Ruitenschild	Marinus Kroon
Wilhelmine Essberger	Paul Leonard De Ridder	Slawomir Narloch	Niels Zeinstra
Selinda (under new management)			
Swakop (under new management)			
Zambesi (under new management)			

Aus der Reederei-Familie

Jubiläen

40 Jahre

Michael Davies, *Trades,* 10.01.1979

25 Jahre

Capt. Janusz Ladkowski, *Crewing,* 15.12.1993

10 Jahre

Mikhail Borisyuk, *2/E,* 17.12.2008
Grzegorz Kakol, *C/O,* 05.01.2009
Valerijs Drozdovich, *Ship Management,* 12.01.2009
Dmitry Shcherbov, *C/E,* 17.01.2009
Maj Reger, *Ship Management,* 01.02.2009
Mikko Joseph Tomo Guzman, *3/O,* 25.02.2009

Besondere Geburtstage

85 Jahre

Gerhard Weber, 17.01.1934

80 Jahre

Hans-Dieter Sohst, 31.01.1939

70 Jahre

Manfred Jastorff,
14.02.1949

50 Jahre

Pieter Pasterkamp,
CE, 26.12.1968
Ruben Arenas Fernandez,
3/E, 04.01.1969
Samuel Quinanola Ruedas,
C/O, 16.02.1969
Cora Thiergarth,
Trades, 20.02.1969

Neue Mitarbeiter an Land

Tamara Becker, *DSA Stuttgart*
Björn Kahrmann, *Operations Liner Services*
Sascha Schank, *DSA Düsseldorf*

In den Ruhestand traten/treten

Capt. Jan Buisman, *JTE,* 15.11.2018
Gabriele Bartsch,
Hammonia Reisebüro, 31.12.2018
Wolfgang Ignorek,
Operations Liner Services, 31.12.2018
Felicitas Leonhard,
DSA München, 31.12.2018
Ingrid Shum,
Accounting, 31.01.2019
Annaluise Völckner,
Accounting, 31.01.2019

Wir gratulieren zur Geburt eines Kindes

Christine Betzold, Emil am 24.10.2018
Daniel Karstens, Henri Christopher
am 09.11.2018
Linda Lorenz, Leilani am 17.11.2018

Geheiratet hat

Christian Vang (15.09.2018)

Caroline von Rantzau and Thandi enjoy a break from office work in Cape Town

Gaining her first experience in CT

Between her last day at school and her first day at university Caroline von Rantzau looks into the business

The 17th September 2018 was the first day of my three-month practical secondment at Maersk Line in Cape Town (CT). I was impressed by the caring and genuine attitude towards myself shown by my team right from the start. Initially I was placed in the Sales department and permitted, after a few days, to work on my own. After that I was allowed to gain experience in the Customer Service division and was able to take part in a number of telephonic discussions with customers. Over and above this, I was able to be present during a face-to-face customer meeting. After that I was given an insight into the Trade and Marketing departments, where I took responsibility for email marketing. All in all I can say that I received superb insight into how Maersk operates, and was able to learn considerably how the different departments function together. But in addition to the manner in which individuals cooperate with one another within a team, the friendly and open, caring attitude displayed was most impressive and gave me a lot of pleasure. It was a wonderful time, and I decidedly learnt a lot for my future. I thank the Maersk team in Cape Town with all my heart.

"I greet everyone with a smile"

Mohamed Atallah comes from Egypt and is now a colleague working in our UAFL Mauritius office

This is Mohamed Atallah. I am coming to you from the land of the pharaohs and if you're a football fan, then the land of Mo Salah – Egypt. Proud father of Hamza, Bilal, and Omar, and husband of Rabab Elwy.

I spent most of my teenage years as a professional volleyball player, and in my free time I'd draw caricatures – but not just in my notepad. I took to the walls of my room as well. I'd go diving, bungee jumping, and socialising like crazy as if I was planning to run for elections. After completing high school, I started my Bachelor's degree in Political Science at the American University in Cairo but as I got closer to graduation, I realised that it wasn't really my thing.

After I graduated my uncle then stepped in, and called one of his friends who owned a shipping agency and landed me a job. And so it was, I had to let go of my art and start my shipping journey at the age of 21.

From art to shipping, the first thought that came to my mind when I started was that I was just getting a standard 9-5 job, but instead I found myself being exposed to an industry that is thousands of years old, that actually connects all parts of the world, just like the Internet!

Several factors started shaping my work style and how I deal with my job, colleagues and managers on a day-to-day basis. First, there is my experience as the volleyball team captain as a teenager: I learned to deal with different kinds of personalities, the stubborn, the shy, the indecisive, etc., and to influence them to work productively as a team disregarding our differences. The second factor is travelling. It is one of my greatest passions. I managed to visit 41 countries and 100-plus cities. I met people of all cultures, mentalities, nationalities, religions and languages. I learned to overcome language barriers, accept and embrace that we are all different, be open-minded, be curious about different cultures and that learning about these cultures is an essential part of our experience as human beings. The third and final factor is how my culture shaped my character and how I'm trying to bring that into my professional dealings.

My career in shipping turned out to be quite the adventure and got me to work in Cairo, Dubai and Hong Kong. I also worked for big companies and medium-sized companies and most recently

From Egypt with a smile: Mohamed Atallah gives advice by phone

UAFL. While working for bigger companies has its advantages, I felt like my hands were tied, as there was usually a very long chain of command. Working for smaller companies like UAFL gives you the freedom for creativity, faster decision-making and feeling more accountable and responsible for your decisions.

After working in the shipping industry for a while, I started forming my own shipping philosophy, or so I would like to think, as I usually tell my friends that the shipping industry is the thermometer of the global economy; when we (shipping professionals) see a surge, that means that the global economy is strong and trade is flourishing while the opposite is also true. I am sure someone must be wondering by now what brought me to Mauritius?

While I was working with Emirates based in Dubai I got to know UAFL and a part of the team, and I liked what I saw. One day I learned from my predecessor, Ole Raduenzel, that he had decided to go back to Germany to pursue his career. When I heard that, I immediately asked him if I could apply for his position in UAFL. Why did I do that? Simply because I like to walk the road less travelled. I believe that constantly challenging myself, doing things the unconventional way, always keeping myself out of my comfort zone is the only way to live.

So, it didn't take me much time to decide to become part of the UAFL team. I knew I was about to start a new adventure and I was excited to see where it takes me, and I do believe it's been one of the best decisions that I have ever taken. My dream while I'm at UAFL is to be able to leave a positive imprint; to be able to help the company grow and to leave a legacy.

Isolation and loneliness on board could relate to use of social media

The dark side of better communication with home/An interview with Hamburg's Port Chaplain Anke Wibel

Depression amongst seafarers is a phenomenon which is becoming increasingly visible in shipping. One of the reasons for this is an excessive use of social media, which, strangely enough, leads to increasing isolation and loneliness on board, instead of creating greater togetherness. DAL/JTE News spoke to Anke Wibel, who has served for 22 years as Hamburg's Port Chaplain and head of the city's seamen's mission "Duckdalben". She hails from Norden, a town on the North Sea shore, and holds a degree in education for religion and social behaviour.

DAL/JTE NEWS: Latest scientific research points to increasing levels of depression that can even lead to suicide amongst merchant ship sailors. Social media could be a cause for this trend. What is your personal experience as port chaplain at Hamburg's seafarers' mission Duckdalben?

ANKE WIBEL: I have absolutely no doubt that a connection between better access to social media and the increasing mental isolation of staff at sea exists. It has become an unmistakable, growing trend over the past 10 to 15 years.

DAL/JTE NEWS: But don't social media improve the connectivity between seafarers and their friends and families in that they can be reached virtually at any time, and so participate in the latter's lives?

ANKE WIBEL: Yes, that's true. But we often notice contradicting symptoms during our visits on ships, as well as here in Duckdalben. Sailors come in, plug in their headsets or earphones, pull down their woolly hats, and become engrossed with their smartphones, contact families or surf the web. Any sense of community values gets lost.

DAK/JTE NEWS: At least they are linked to their families…

ANKE WIBEL: Yes, but that's the problem. How does this kind of communication function? Family members at home talk about their daily experiences, about everyday needs and worries, about money problems and illnesses, about the son's slack performance at school and about mother's stomach aches. Children complain about their father's absence and question his return. Social media puts a spotlight on plenty of intimate family issues. The seaman is only a listener, there is not much to say about the mundaneness ship life. Who at home is interested in workloads on board, or that a cylinder head had to be pulled out yesterday? For today's seafarers, new places and exciting cities don't exist anymore, time in port is far too short. Sailors face tedious boredom and the urge to keep closer contact back home. And so the seafarer becomes increasingly hooked to social media. It doesn't take him to a new world, and he cannot say goodbye to the old one. In the past, it used to be different.

Photo: Peter Neumann/VPS

Port Chaplain Anke Wibel in the seamen's mission "Duckdalben", Hamburg

DAL/JTE NEWS: One didn't phone home all that often. Lines were bad and calls expensive.

ANKE WIBEL: I agree, but in those days, time spent on the phone was extremely valuable. Only important issues were shared. The joy of, at long last, listening to one's partner's voice on the phone left no space for everyday complaints. Today seafarers keep silent. They have become helpless onlookers of their family, they can neither participate or intervene. Many have the feeling that life is slipping by, watching it makes them lonely, depressive and ill.

DAL/JTE NEWS: Do you notice the effects in Duckdalben?

ANKE WIBEL: Most certainly. As we have a care programme for the sick, we have noticed a definite increase in blurred illness symptoms with most probably psychosomatic backgrounds. But it can get worse. If, for example, a Philippine or Kiribati seaman winds up in hospital for recuperation, he is fed bread for breakfast, potatoes for lunch and bread again for supper. That can't work.

DAL/JTE NEWS: Is there a remedy for on-board loneliness?

ANKE WIBEL: We should always keep yesterday's good old values in the back of our minds. Our Duckdalben staff animate seafarers to do things together with others. Karaoke can play an important role. It acts as a safety valve for the soul, singing articulates joy and pain. Karaoke might sound ghastly, but one can feel how singers sing themselves free and shed burdens. Simple things often overcome our visitors: a vase with real flowers that they can touch. A pretty tablecloth. My dog who enjoys a romp with sailors. Things like these give them a feeling of home. Last December we had an Advent calendar in Duckdalben. Only one of our visitors could open one of the 24 doors at a time, but everybody took part in the daily door-opening sessions, and everybody spoke about who had what behind their doors.

DAL/JTE NEWS: What can you recommend against isolation at sea?

ANKE WIBEL: Depression must be outfaced by good things. Well-run shipping companies look after their crews and understand how good care influences health and motivation. Good care starts with sharing good food during a good meal. It includes creating diversity on board, in other words, finding ways of doing things together – for example playing board games instead of Playstation consoles. Good care is a barbecue, a table soccer tournament, karaoke of course, playing the guitar and everything else that causes people to leave cabins and corners and to interact with each other.

(More on this subject features in Lena Hoffmann's master thesis in Security & Safety Engineering "Psychische Belastungen in der Seeschifffahrt – Datenerhebung & Ansätze einer wirksamen Gefährdungsermittlung", Cux., 2018).

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